

It is impossible to understand the political relations of the two Houses of Parliament apart from the social relations of the country gentlemen to the* nobles. It may be asked why the Commons, being many of them knight H trained to arms, never tried their military strength iigamat tho retainers, in an attempt to break tip those bands of peity tyrants. The reason is plain, A country gontlomun* was frequently bound by ties of affection or inferoftt to Borne noble, fought under his banner, lived in his ca«tlo, and often commanded companies of his men. Even Fater do la Mare WUB attached to the household of the Karl of March aa his lordship's seneschal. Military training was only obtainable in the service of private persons. There was no u flu* urn t system of county militia. The more independent a man was, the less military he became, A large part of the cln-HH represented by the knights of the shire in the House of CommunH consisted of gentlemen free indeed from the patronage of any noble, but wholly ignorant of tho use of arms. The Franklin of Chaucer's 'Canterbury Pilgrimage' is a Htnall but independent landowner, not, like his companion the Knight, trained to war, but essentially a man of peace. His larder is well stocked, aad his hospitality is profuse :—

"Withouton bake mote never wan hJ«
hou*, Of fish and flesh and that \$o
 piuxitcmiK It snowed in his houa of
 mote* ant! drink*. Ful many a fat
partich hatldo ho in im«w** And
many a brouio and many luce in
 «u»w«. ^f

He is a hearty liver, almost a sot. Hi\$ education is a negligible quantity, for he has not been brought up either in the school of chivalry or In the school of the Church. * But aires,' he says when his turn comes round to tell a tale*

At my beginning first 1 you
 Have me excused of my rad4 spoche,
 I learned never rhetoric certain;
 Thing that I speke, it mot© be bare and jala

He nevertheless takes an important part in affairs ;

At sessions ther was he lord and
 eire, A aheriffe had he been and
 a

¹ See note, p. 58.

* FiJce |_n fi«h-pomK